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Economic Gender-Based Violence in Baalbeck District

This Participatory Action Research study was led by the Trainer, Miss Farah Ahmad Rayya. It was a team effort that brought together women from various backgrounds, each sharing their personal experiences and perspectives. Their combined insights were essential in providing a fuller understanding of the issues at hand and contributed greatly to the overall findings. The participants included:

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The study sought to explore and document the various forms and prevalence of economic violence against women in Baalbeck. It also aimed to evaluate how this violence affects women's daily lives and overall well-being. Additionally, the research was focused on developing comprehensive and practical recommendations to address and mitigate economic violence, to create a safer and more supportive environment in the Baalbeck district.

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Economic Gender-Based Violence in Baalbeck District

List of Abbreviations

PAR	Participatory Action Research
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
EVAW	Economic Violence Against Women
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
EIP	Economic inclusion policy
TWEE	Teaching Women Enhanced English
USPEaK	Universally Specific Purposes of English and Knowledge (NGO)
KAFA	Non - Governmental organization
RDFL	The Lebanese Women's Democratic Gathering (NGO)

Women Forward

Modern women take up leadership roles and get actively involved in initiatives addressing social issues of common concern, including economic violence. This research puts women at the center of indispensable knowledge dealing with the general and specific aspects of countering economic violence in Baalbeck. Their general involvement ensures that the research is deeply rooted in their lived experiences, thus making it relevant and impactful. More specifically, women lead from the frontline as project coordinators, field researchers, and data analysts, taking the project to a phase where their views and expertise are unique. In performing their tasks—community engagement, collaborative decision-making, and constant feedback—they ensure accuracy and responsiveness for the research. By integrating women's leadership and participation throughout the project, we will not just empower women; this will make it more effective and culturally relevant for change to be sustainable and with women's economic rights advocacy in Baalbeck.

This Participatory Action Research brings together current women who participated in the Teaching Women Enhanced English Program and program alumni from the last two years. It is part of a program funded by the U.S. Embassy in Beirut and implemented by USPEaK. The women who participated in this research are themselves from Baalbeck Region.

Background and Rationale

Economic violence against women is a significant issue that has serious short- and long-term physical, financial, and psychological consequences on women and girls, preventing their full and equal participation in society.¹ It encompasses any action or omission aimed at economic abuse or abusive

¹ <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/faqs/types-of-violence>





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control of finances, monetary rewards, or punishments of women due to their social, economic, or political condition.² This issue is not confined to specific social or economic boundaries. It affects women and girls of all socioeconomic backgrounds, necessitating a community-based, multi-pronged approach to address it.³

Defining Economic Violence Against Women

Economic violence against women is defined as any action or omission aimed at economic abuse or abusive control of finances, monetary rewards, or punishments of women due to their social, economic, or political condition.² This can occur in partner, family, work, or economic relationships.

Causes of Economic Violence Against Women

Several causes contribute to economic violence against women, including socioeconomic inequality, discriminatory policies and practices, structural factors such as sexism, lack of social support systems, education disparities, geographic limitations, prejudice and stereotypes, and limited access to legal rights and protection. These factors create barriers and obstacles that prevent women from achieving economic equality and accessing the same opportunities as men.⁴

Effects of Economic Violence Against Women

Violence against women has profound effects on individuals and communities, leading to physical and psychological trauma, diminished self-worth, perpetuation of the abuse cycle, erosion of trust and safety within communities, and significant economic impact. Victims often suffer from long-lasting trauma and emotional distress, affecting their sense of self-worth and confidence. This can also lead to a cycle of abuse, with victims feeling trapped in abusive relationships and unable to seek help. Communities also suffer from the effects of violence against women, as it erodes trust and safety, creating a culture of silence and normalization of violence. Additionally, the economic impact of violence against women can be significant, as victims may be unable to work or provide for themselves and their families. Efforts to combat violence against women must be comprehensive and multifaceted, addressing both the root causes of violence and providing support for victims.

Theoretical Framework

In reviewing relevant theories related to economic violence, gender studies, and empowerment, it is essential to consider the interplay of various factors. Heise argues for an integrated ecological framework, emphasizing the multifaceted nature of violence and its interplay with personal, situational, and sociocultural factors. Koenig et al. stress the interrelated effects of contextual and community-level factors, individual and household characteristics, and women's autonomy. Additionally, resource theory and social exchange theory provide valuable insights into the dynamics of violence against women, particularly in vulnerable populations. These theories shed light on the need for comprehensive approaches to prevent and address economic violence against women, considering both the structural and individual factors that contribute to such violence.

² <https://www.womensworldbanking.org/insights/what-is-economic-violence-against-women-and-why-does-it-matter/>

³ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/socialsustainability/brief/violence-against-women-and-girls>

⁴ <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/economic-empowerment/facts-and-figures>

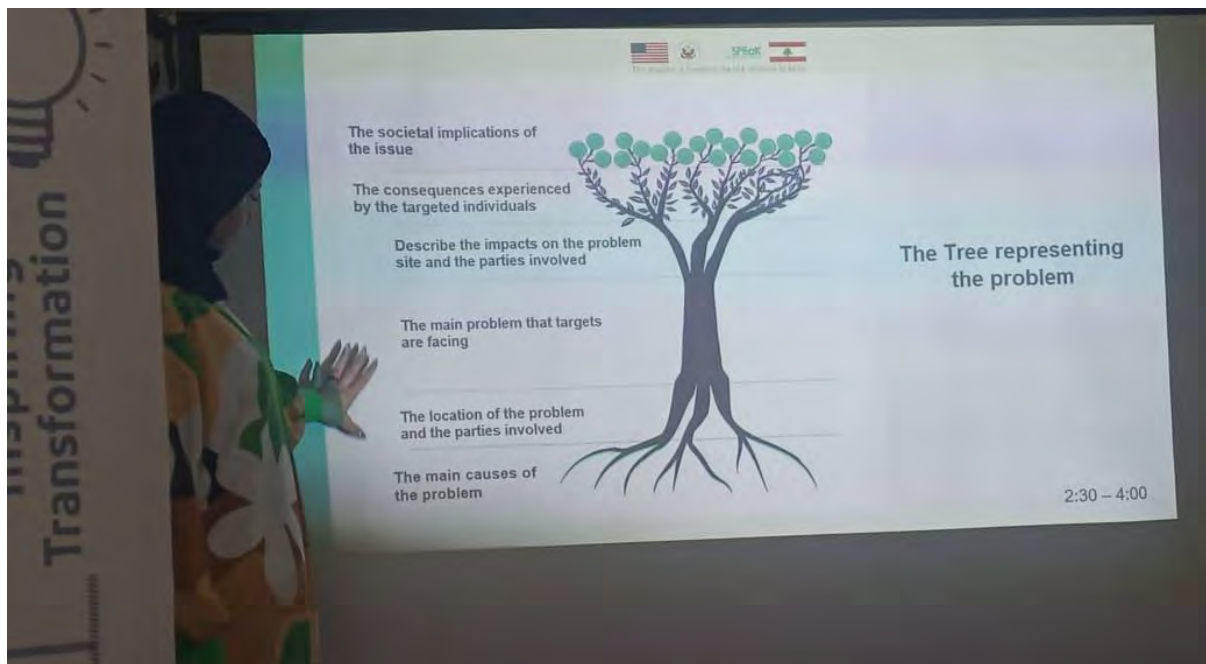




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Significance of the Issue

The significance of economic violence against women lies in its serious short- and long-term physical, economic, and psychological consequences on women and girls, preventing their full and equal participation in society.¹ It is a prevalent human rights violation with severe implications for women's economic empowerment and overall well-being. The issue is not confined to specific social or economic boundaries. It affects women and girls of all socioeconomic backgrounds, necessitating a community-based, multi-pronged approach to address it.³ Furthermore, the economic costs to the global economy of discriminatory social institutions and violence against women are estimated to be approximately USD 6 trillion annually, highlighting the substantial impact of this issue.⁵



The context for the Specific Community

Baalbeck District

Baalbeck district has a unique socioeconomic and cultural background. The intersection of religions, class, and occupation creates a district with economically diverse populations; thus, the experience of economic violence against women varies. Access to resources is significant because economic disparities in wealth and jobs increase vulnerability to EGBV.

Furthermore, the Baalbeck district has faced many other humanitarian, health, and environmental crises besides the deeply rooted issues. The slow-burning conflict in Syria spilled over onto the region, and it caused an influx of refugees who were competing for resources and hence increased the economic pressure on an already unstable environment. The situation was made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic, which brought with it an increase in economic instability and more cases of domestic violence and incidents of EGBV. Climatic change has also affected agricultural livelihoods, one of the chief income sources for many families in Baalbeck, and intensified economic vulnerabilities.

Addressing EGBV was equally contextualized at the local level in the Baalbeck district. It meant understanding the intersecting factors of different religious affiliations, class, resource access, and occupation, as well as the compounded effects of crises like the Syrian conflict, COVID-19, and

⁵ <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/economic-empowerment/facts-and-figures>





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climate change. Thus, tailored interventions to tackle those specific challenges will work more effectively in supporting women under the EIP for economic empowerment and protection from violence in Baalbeck.

Introduction

In a collaborative initiative, the dedicated team involved in the TWEE program and local stakeholders have initiated a significant effort to tackle economic violence against women in the Baalbeck district. Through comprehensive participatory action research (PAR), this research aims to explore the complex relationships surrounding economic violence, its root causes, and its effects on the community. Acknowledging that economic violence serves as a significant barrier to women's empowerment, this research seeks to highlight an essential issue in the lives of women and girls.

The objectives of this Participatory Action Research (PAR) project encompass several key areas. Firstly, the project aims to understand the root causes of economic violence against women in the Baalbeck district by identifying the underlying factors contributing to this issue. Secondly, it seeks to recommend strategies for empowering and supporting women and girls who have experienced or are at risk of economic violence. Additionally, the project assesses the implementation and impact of existing programs and policies designed to address economic violence against women.

Economic violence manifests in various ways and poses a severe challenge that affects not only individual lives but also the overall social fabric. Its consequences go beyond financial distress, often leading to reduced autonomy and heightened vulnerability, underscoring the urgent need for a deeper understanding of this phenomenon. Furthermore, the research promotes knowledge sharing and stakeholder collaboration to prevent and address economic violence effectively.

Throughout this research, we aim to empower women, community members, and stakeholders by illuminating the effects of economic violence and formulating effective strategies to address its consequences. We aspire for the findings to lay the groundwork for future initiatives that promote gender equality and safeguard women's rights in Baalbeck, ensuring that women's voices are integral to these efforts.

Lastly, the project aims to empower and support the women researchers involved, ensuring their active participation, leadership, and capacity building throughout the research process.

The approach taken in this project emphasizes collaboration, reflecting the collective spirit of the TWEE program participants. Community stakeholders, including local women's organizations, played a crucial role in shaping the research instruments, encompassing tailored surveys and discussion frameworks designed to capture insights from various perspectives. This inclusive approach guarantees extensive participation and relevance to the community's needs.

The research employs a mixed-methods framework, adhering to established best practices in participatory studies. The qualitative aspect involves engaging with community members and local experts to gather contextual insights into economic violence. Additionally, quantitative methods involve collecting open data from various sources within the Baalbeck district to provide a well-rounded understanding of the issue. This multifaceted strategy ensures a thorough examination of the factors influencing economic violence against women, demonstrating our commitment to fostering impactful change in the Baalbeck district.





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Methodology

This research utilized Participatory Action Research (PAR) to investigate economic violence against women in the Baalbeck district. This approach is efficient as it emphasizes the active involvement of individuals who experience these issues firsthand. By incorporating diverse perspectives from women affected by economic violence, the study aims to uncover the complex socioeconomic, social, and political factors contributing to this problem and develop effective strategies for addressing it.

The collaborative nature of PAR ensures that the voices of women experiencing economic violence are central to the research process. Participants played an integral role in defining research questions, conducting the study, and implementing potential solutions, which enhanced the inclusivity and relevance of the findings.

Objectives

The objectives of the research are threefold: first, to identify the various forms and prevalence of economic violence against women in Baalbeck; second, to assess the effects of this violence on women's lives; and third, to propose practical recommendations aimed at mitigating economic violence in Baalbeck district.

Project Set-Up

The project commenced in early March and concluded by mid-August. A structured team of 20 participants was organized into specialized groups based on their backgrounds and expertise relevant to different aspects of the study. The team dedicated four full working days at USPEaK's center, complemented by additional efforts individually and in smaller groups. Key activities included defining the research problem, mapping relevant issues, selecting stakeholders and experts, developing survey questions, conducting surveys and interviews, analyzing collected data, and compiling the final research report.

The study adopted a reflective approach with regular meetings, thorough documentation, and ongoing discussions with key stakeholders. Additionally, it implemented measures to ensure the research process remained sensitive to the potential risks associated with the study.

Data Collection

This research utilizes both qualitative and quantitative methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of economic violence against women. By integrating these approaches, the study captures the issue's complexity and ensures that diverse perspectives are represented.

A survey was administered for quantitative data to gather structured information on the prevalence and patterns of economic violence in the Baalbeck district. This Survey enables the identification of key trends and provides a statistical foundation for understanding the broader impact of economic violence on women's lives.

Qualitative data were collected through in-depth interviews conducted by several women with expertise in different fields, alongside one case study of a woman who has experienced economic violence. This approach allows for a deeper understanding of participants' complex challenges, capturing their unique stories and insights. By combining quantitative and qualitative methods, the research highlights systemic factors contributing to economic violence in the Baalbeck district while amplifying the voices of those directly affected.



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Surveys and Interviews

This research employed a survey and several interviews as key data collection methods to explore economic violence against women. The Survey was designed to obtain structured quantitative data on the prevalence and specific forms of economic violence encountered by women in the Baalbeck district. A total of 226 respondents participated in the Survey, facilitating the identification of important trends and patterns that contribute to a broader understanding of the issue's impact.

Complementing the surveys, semi-structured interviews were conducted to capture the personal narratives and contextual factors surrounding economic violence. These interviews involved several women with diverse expertise, including Rana Aoun Rana Aoun, who is an expert and activist against GBV with extensive knowledge and experience in the civil society sector in Lebanon, a GBV case manager; Maria Moukheiber, a psychologist; Sumar Slim, a lawyer; and Roba Makarem, an activist, along with an anonymous case study of a woman who has experienced such violence. This methodology allowed participants to express their experiences and coping strategies in a safe environment, enriching the findings.

Results and Analysis

Research Samples

Economic Violence Against Women in Baalbeck

Figure 1

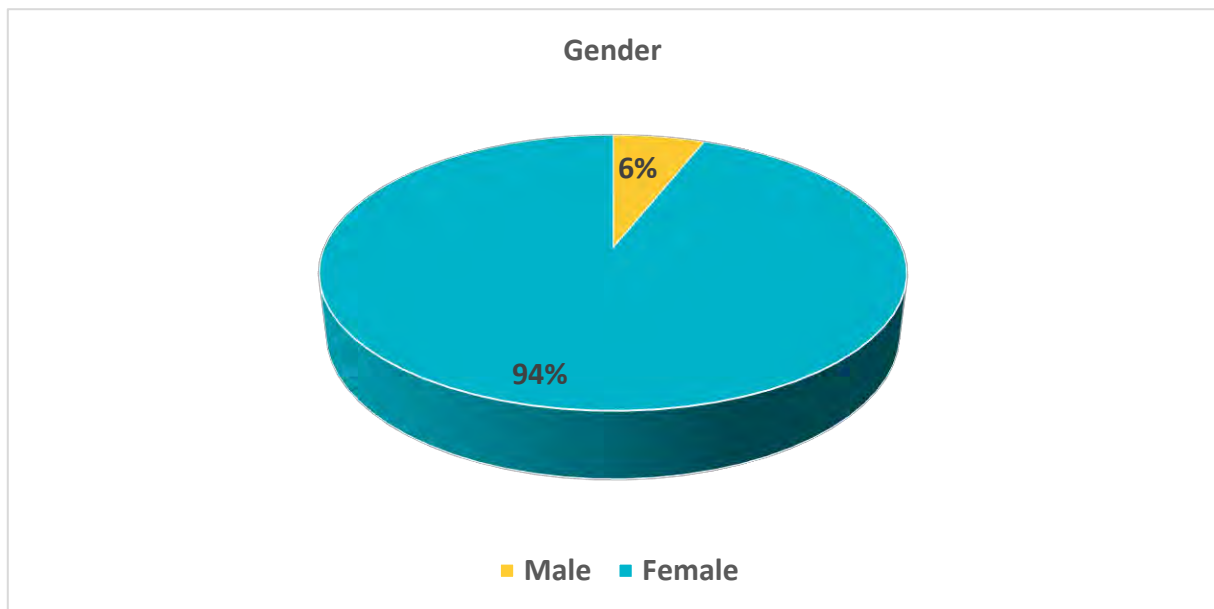




Figure 2

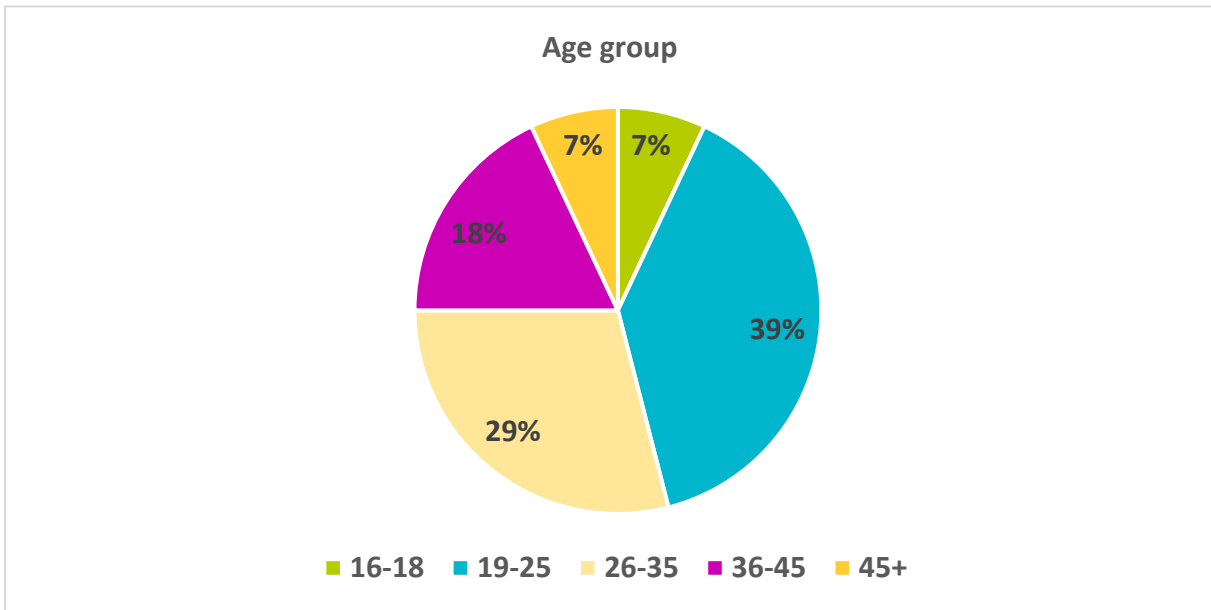
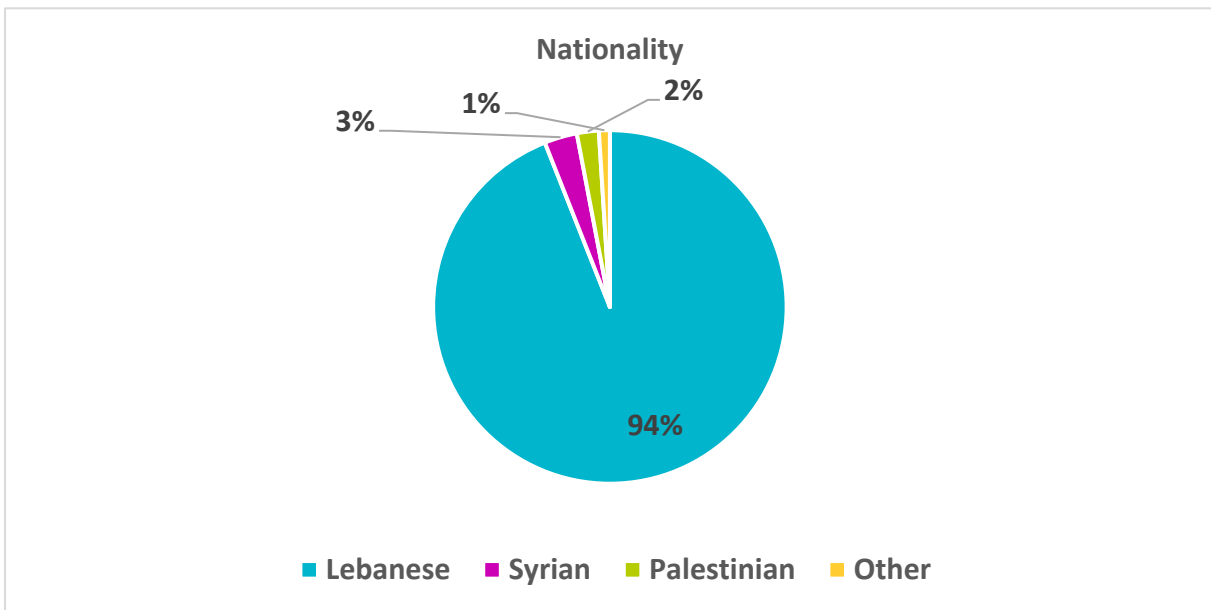


Figure 3





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Figure 4

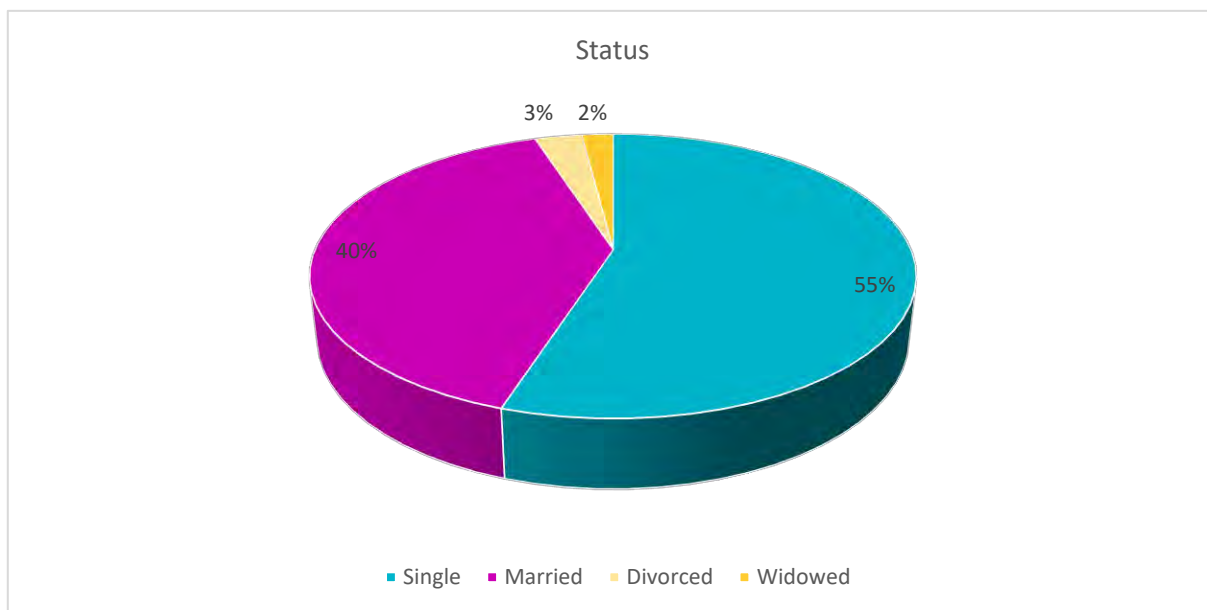
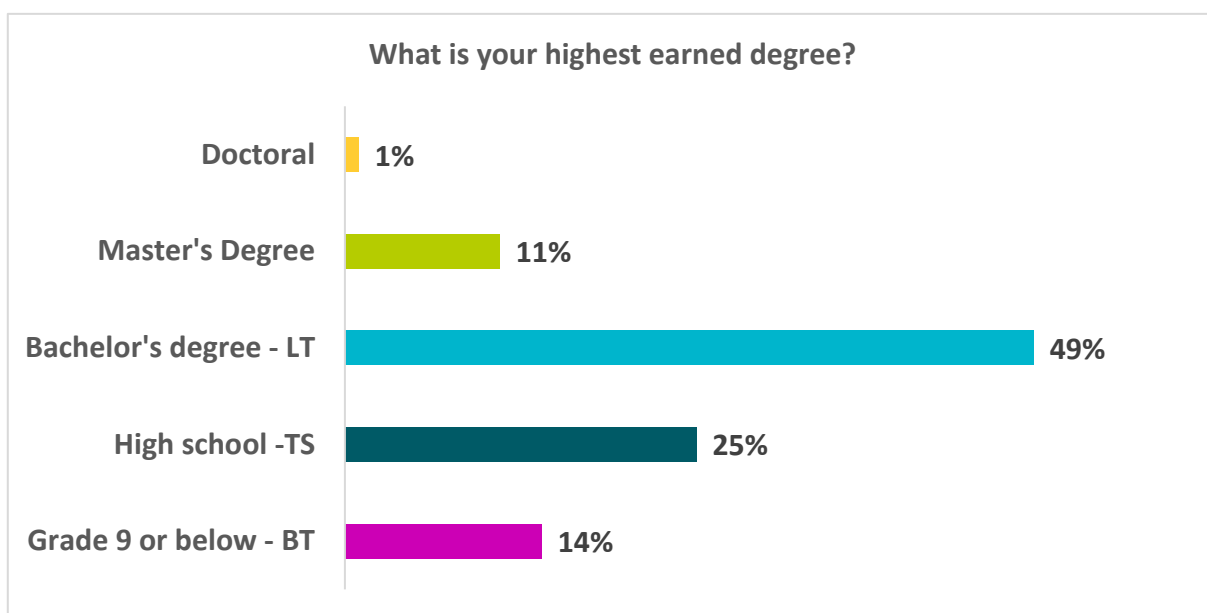


Figure 5



A total of 226 individuals participated in this study, with the majority being female (94%) (Figure 1). The respondents included age groups: teenagers, young adults, adults, middle-aged adults, and older adults, as illustrated in Table 1 below and as Figure 2 shows. Most participants were Lebanese nationals (94%) (Figure 3).

Regarding marital status, 55% of participants were single, 40% were married, 3% were divorced, and 2% were widowed (Figure 4). Educational backgrounds varied, with 1% holding a doctorate, 11% having a master’s degree, 49% possessing a bachelor’s degree or LT, 25% having a high school diploma or TS, and 14% having completed grade 9 or below, as shown in Figure 5.





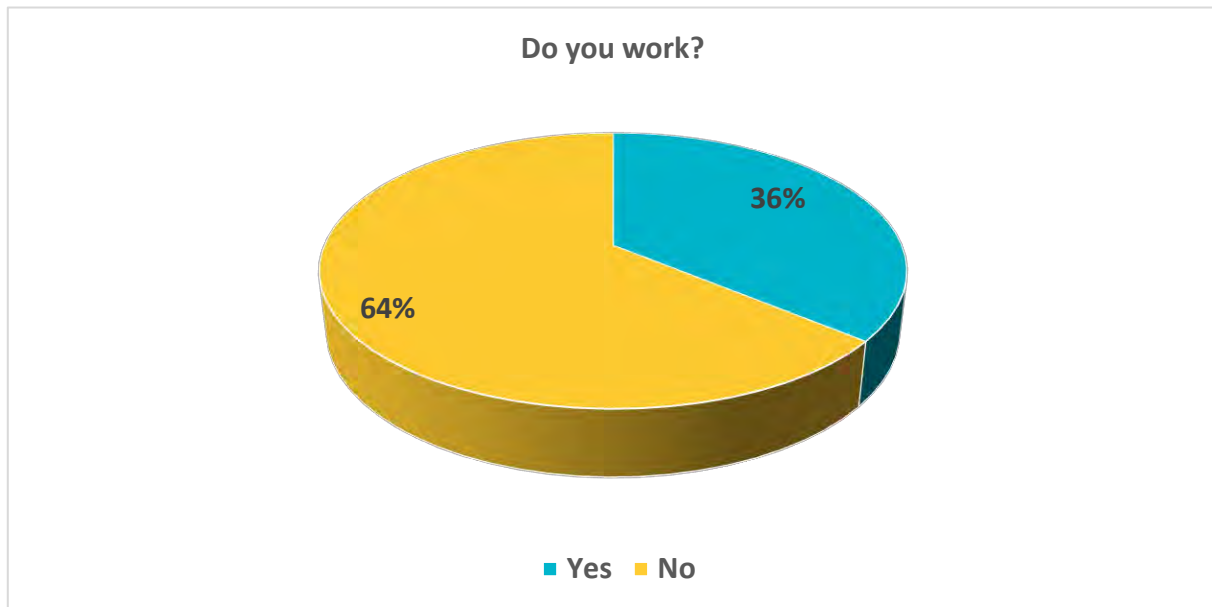
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Table 1

Participants

Category	Age Group	Numbers	Percentage
Teenagers	16-18	16	7%
Young adults	19-25	88	39%
Adults	26-35	66	29%
Middle-aged adults	36-45	41	18%
Older adults	45+	16	7%

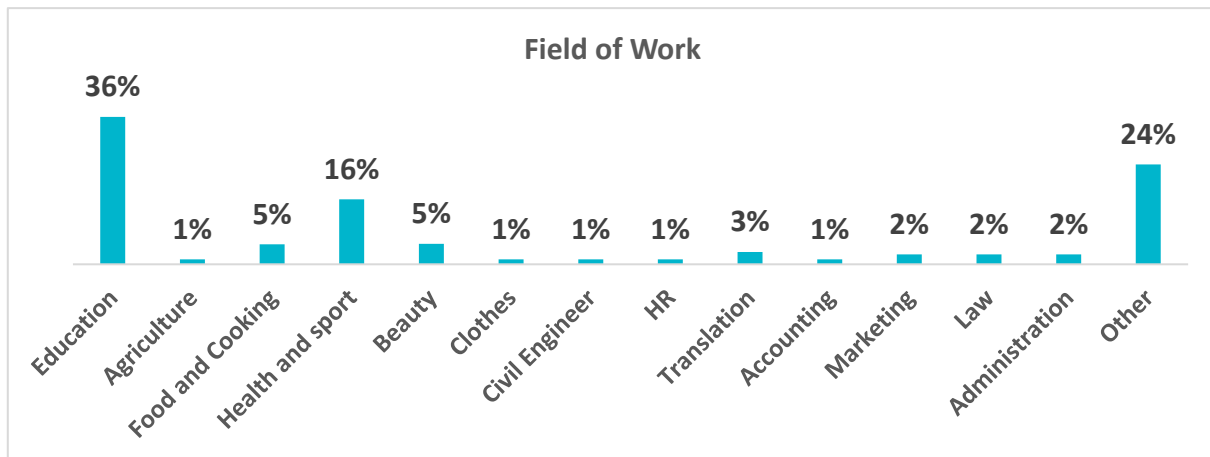
Figure 6





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Figure 7

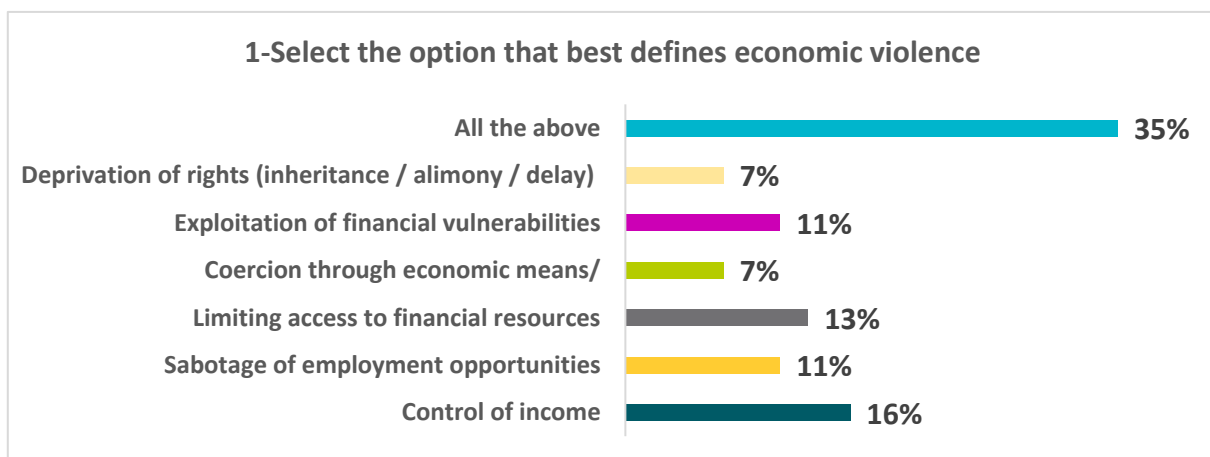


The employment distribution among respondents, in Figure 6, shows the significant engagement in various professional fields, with a notable concentration in education. This aligns with the diverse educational backgrounds reported earlier, suggesting that respondents with higher academic qualifications are likely leveraging their skills in specialized fields such as education. The relatively high percentage (64%) of employed individuals indicates an active workforce, which is consistent with the overall profile of the respondents being predominantly young and middle-aged adults.

The employment sectors listed in Figure 7, such as health, beauty, and food, reflect various professional interests. At the same time, 24% of "Other" indicates a variety of additional fields that are not explicitly categorized. This diversity in employment sectors may indicate the respondents' adaptability and the broad application of their skills and expertise across different industries.

Comparatively, the relatively small percentages in sectors such as translation, marketing, and law, as well as the low representation in clothing, civil engineering, human resources, and accounting, suggest that these fields are less prominent among the respondents. This may reflect the broader job market trends or personal career preferences of the study participants.

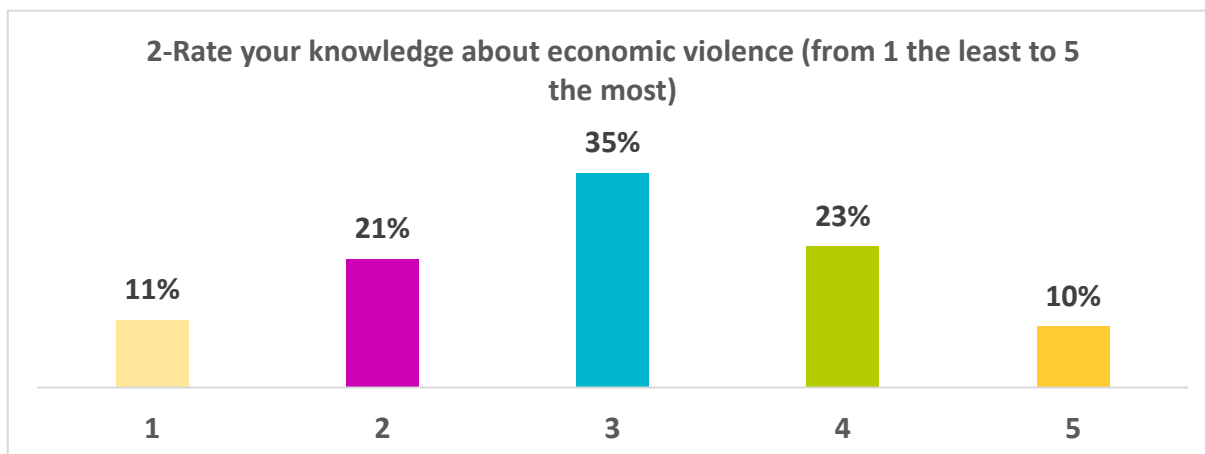
Figure 8





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Figure 9

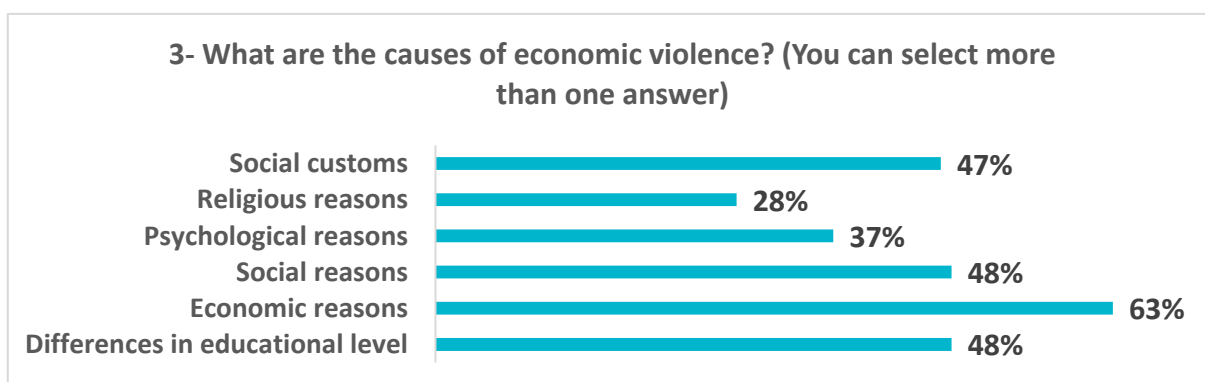


Respondents were asked to define economic violence, and their answers revealed a broad understanding of the concept. The most common response, selected by 35% of participants, was that economic violence includes all the listed forms. Specific forms identified included controlling income (16%), limiting access to financial resources (13%), exploitation of financial vulnerabilities (11%), and sabotage of employment opportunities (11%). Smaller proportions recognized economic violence as deprivation of inheritance rights, alimony, dowry, or coercion through financial means, each accounting for 7% of responses, as depicted in Figure 8.

Evaluating their knowledge of economic violence on a scale from 1 (least knowledgeable) to 5 (most knowledgeable), the results shown in Figure 9 revealed a spectrum of awareness: 11% of participants indicated minimal awareness, while 21% reported limited understanding. The majority displayed a moderate level of knowledge (35%), with 23% demonstrating a relatively high level of understanding. A smaller group (10%) exhibited extensive knowledge of the subject.

The results indicate a significant recognition of economic violence as encompassing multiple forms, with a substantial proportion acknowledging its complexity. However, the self-assessed knowledge ratings reflect a moderate level of understanding among respondents. The majority rated their knowledge as average (3), suggesting that while there is a general awareness of economic violence, further educational efforts may be necessary to enhance comprehension and address the issue more effectively.

Figure 10

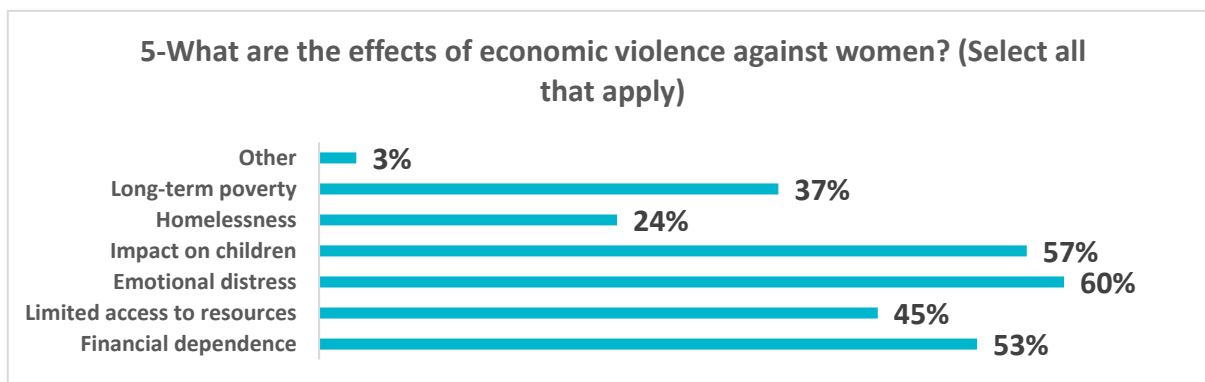




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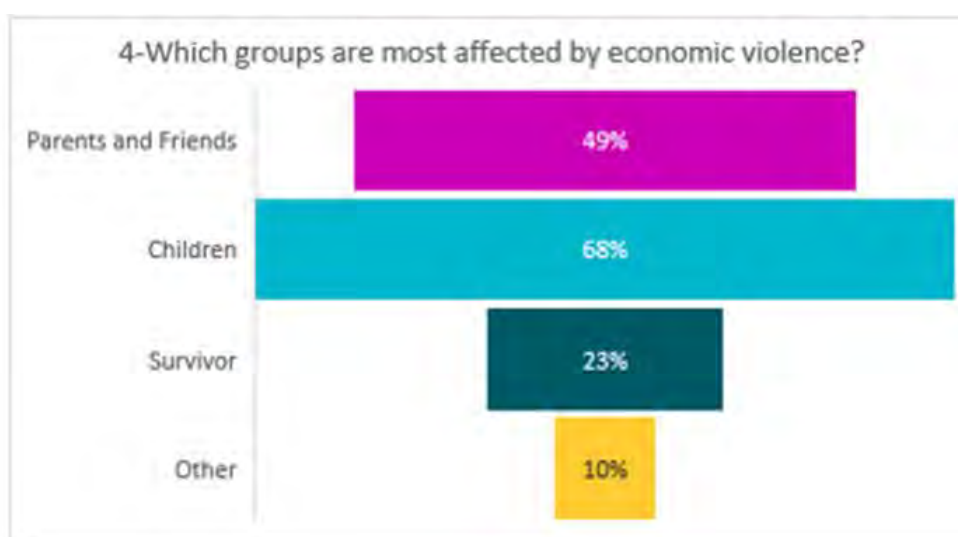
The chart of Figure 10 illustrates the perceived causes of economic violence identified by respondents, who were allowed to select multiple answers. Financial reasons are the most commonly cited cause, identified by 63% of respondents. Social reasons and differences in educational level are both recognized by 48% of respondents, indicating a significant acknowledgment of these factors. Social customs are noted by 47% of respondents, highlighting their importance in contributing to economic violence. Psychological reasons are identified by 37% of respondents, suggesting that mental and emotional factors also play a role. Lastly, religious reasons are the least cited cause, noted by 28% of respondents, indicating that they are perceived as less influential compared to other factors.

Figure 11



Besides, the chart of Figure 11 outlines the perceived effects of economic violence against women, with respondents selecting multiple applicable effects. Emotional distress is identified as the most common effect, cited by 60% of respondents. This is followed by the impact on children, noted by 57% of respondents, and financial dependence, reported by 53%. Limited access to resources is recognized by 45% of respondents, while long-term poverty is mentioned by 37%. Homelessness is identified by 24% of respondents, and a small percentage (3%) noted other unspecified effects. These results highlight the multifaceted and far-reaching consequences of economic violence on women's lives, affecting their emotional well-being, financial stability, and familial responsibilities.

Figure 12

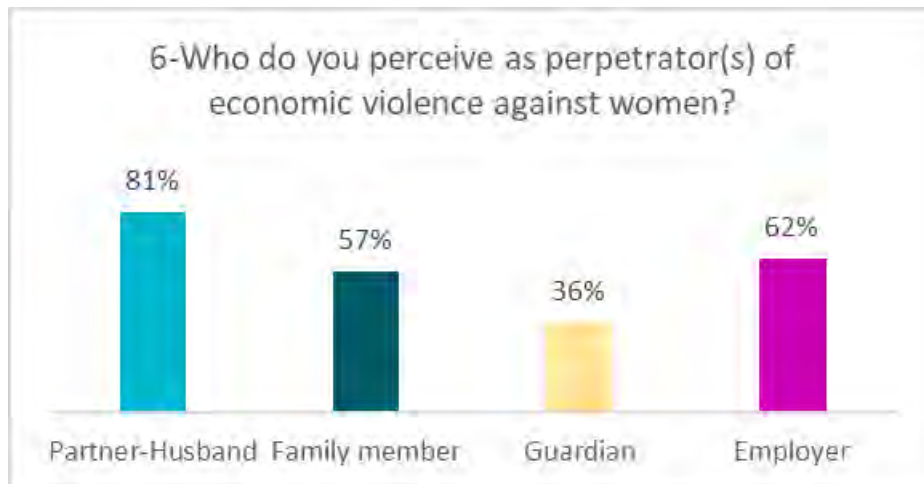




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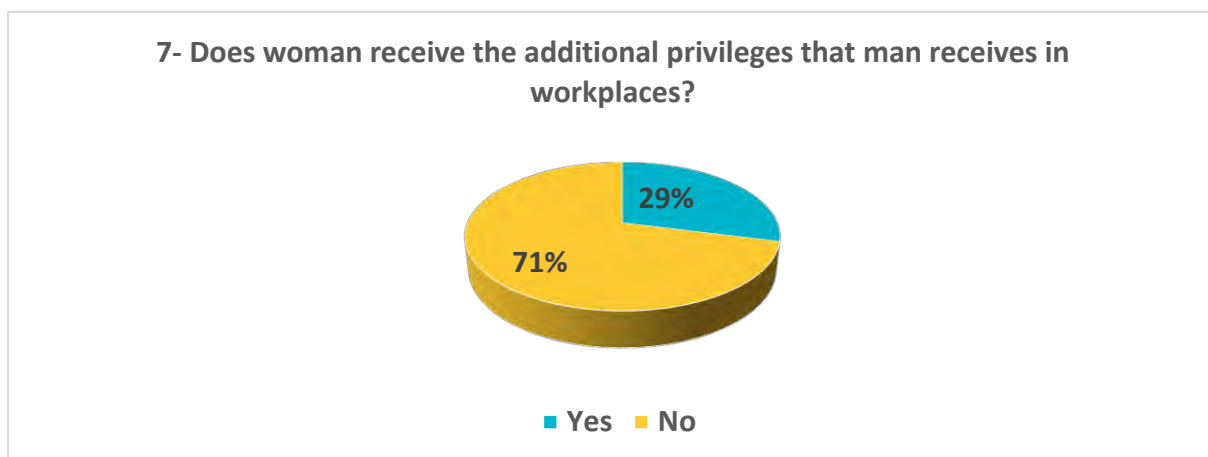
As presented in Figure 12, the majority of respondents (68%) identified children as the group most affected by EGBV, followed by parents and friends, who were identified by 49% of respondents. Survivors themselves were noted by 23% of respondents, while 10% indicated other groups not specified in the Survey. These results highlight that economic violence is seen as having a broad impact, affecting not only the direct survivors but also their immediate social circles, particularly the children involved.

Figure 13



The majority of the respondents (81%) believe that the partner or the husband is identified as the primary perpetrator of EGBV against women. Family members were identified by 57% of respondents, while 62% pointed to employers. Guardians were perceived as perpetrators by 36% of respondents, based on Figure 13. These percentages reflect the various sources of economic violence that women face, spanning intimate relationships, family dynamics, and workplace interactions.

Figure 14



Most respondents (71%) believe that women do not receive the same additional privileges in the workplace as men. Conversely, a smaller proportion of respondents (29%) feel that women receive equivalent privileges. This data highlights a perceived disparity in workplace privileges between men and women. (Figure 14)

The responses to workplace privileges reveal significant aspects of economic gender-based violence (EGBV). Men's more accessible promotion paths, abundant job opportunities, and higher salaries





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indicate systemic biases that limit women's career advancement and income potential, reflecting economic inequality. The unequal distribution of professional support, material benefits, and higher positions for men further exemplifies institutionalized EGBV, reinforcing power dynamics that economically marginalize women. Societal norms and religious beliefs that prioritize men's roles exacerbate EGBV by justifying economic disparities and restricting women's financial autonomy. Challenges in integrating into government jobs and accessing certain rights highlight systemic barriers, perpetuating EGBV. These findings align with the 71% of respondents who believe women do not receive the same workplace privileges as men, underscoring the pervasive nature of EGBV in various professional environments.

Figure 15

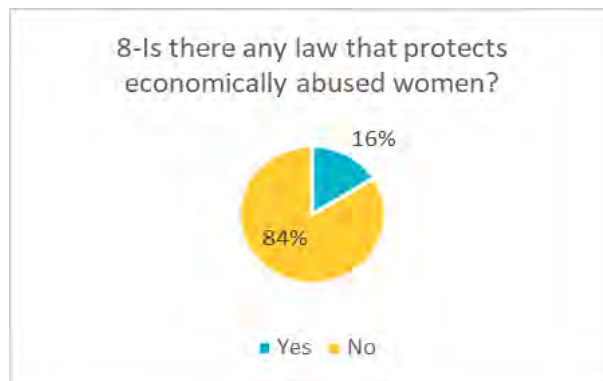


Figure 15 shows that 84% of respondents believe there is no law protecting economically abused women, while only 16% believe such legal protections exist. This highlights a significant perceived gap in legal measures addressing economic gender-based violence.

Respondents who believe there are laws protecting economically abused women cited Law 293/2014 as a significant advancement. This law offers legal and social protection against economic violence and workplace discrimination. It ensures women's rights by safeguarding them from financial abuse, promoting equal job opportunities regardless of educational level, and preventing exploitation in harmful working conditions. Various countries have enacted similar laws to protect economically abused women, reinforcing the importance of legal frameworks in combating economic gender-based violence.

Figure 16





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Figure 17

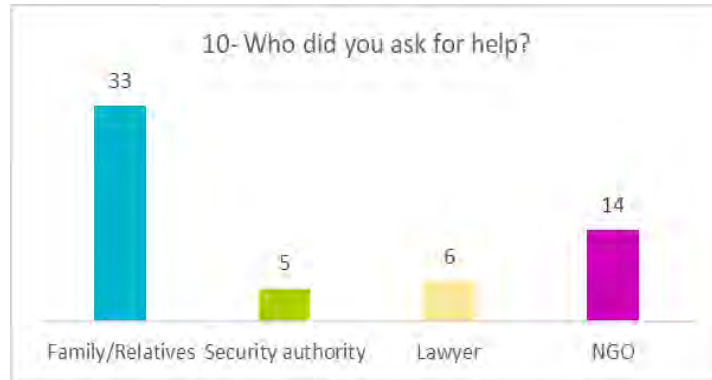
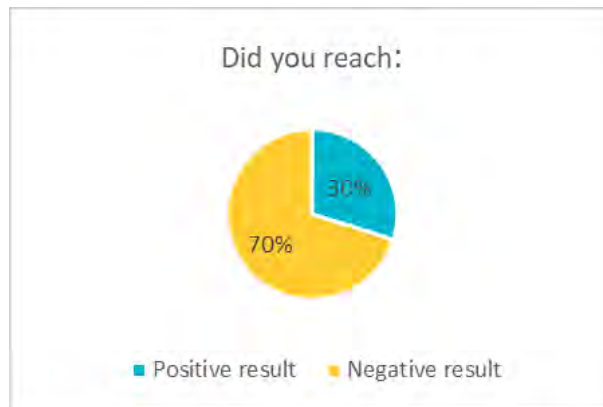


Figure 18



Based on Figure 16, 40% of the respondents reported experiencing EGBV, either personally or through friends and relatives, while 60% reported no such experiences. Among those who sought help, 33% turned to family or relatives, 5% to security authorities, 6% to lawyers, and 14% to NGOs, as Figure 17 illustrates. However, the outcomes were largely unfavorable, with 70% experiencing negative results and only 30% reporting positive outcomes, with reference to Figure 18.

These findings indicate that while a significant portion of respondents have encountered EGBV, most sought assistance from informal sources like family or relatives. Professional help was less frequently sought from security authorities, lawyers, or NGOs. Despite these efforts, the majority of those who sought help reported negative outcomes, highlighting the need for more effective support systems and interventions to address economic gender-based violence.





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Survey Analysis:

The survey data highlights a concerning prevalence of economic gender-based violence (EGBV) in Baalbeck, with 40% of respondents or their acquaintances having experienced it. This underscores the widespread nature of EGBV and the urgent need for targeted interventions. The data also reveals a significant reliance on informal support systems, with 33% of respondents seeking help from family or relatives. In contrast, formal support systems, such as security authorities (5%), lawyers (6%), and NGOs (14%), are markedly underutilized. This suggests potential barriers such as lack of awareness, trust, or accessibility in seeking formal assistance.

Moreover, the outcomes of seeking help are predominantly adverse, with 70% reporting unsatisfactory results, indicating critical gaps in the effectiveness of current support mechanisms. The identification of partners or husbands (81%), family members (57%), and employers (62%) as the primary perpetrators of EGBV further emphasizes the need for comprehensive approaches that address both personal and professional spheres of women's lives.

The Survey also highlights significant workplace disparities, with 71% of respondents believing that women do not receive the same privileges as men, which is a clear reflection of economic violence and discrimination in professional settings. Additionally, the perceived lack of legal protection for economically abused women, as indicated by 84% of respondents, points to a pressing need for more robust legislative measures and public awareness campaigns.

In conclusion, the survey data underscores the pervasive and multifaceted nature of EGBV in Baalbeck, highlighting the need for robust legal, social, and economic interventions to address and mitigate this form of violence against women effectively.





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Interviews:

During the research, interviews were conducted with professionals from diverse fields and a survivor to delve into EGBV. Ms. Ruba Makarem, a social activist in women's rights, identified various forms of economic violence and the factors contributing to its prevalence, such as social, legal, and personal reasons. She discussed the challenges in combating economic violence, including short-term funding, delays in protective laws, financial resource shortages, and limited social work scope. Makarem highlighted successful initiatives, particularly USPEaK programs covering multiple regions in Lebanon, and referenced research studies on economic violence.

Dr. Maria Moukhaiber, a psychologist, defined economic violence as depriving women of financial resources, affecting not only the individual but also their family and society. She described the severe psychological consequences, including depression and substance abuse, and noted that many women misunderstand economic violence. Dr. Maria shared therapeutic techniques and recommended skill development and networking. She provided examples from her clinic, illustrating the impact on children and families, and praised the role of associations in providing education and support.

Professor Soumar Slim discussed economic violence linked to pressures on women to relinquish legal rights and inheritances. She addressed challenges like proving spousal abuse and inadequacies in Sharia law. Selim highlighted issues such as gender discrimination in inheritance and inconsistencies between civil and Sharia courts. She called for comprehensive legislation, better judicial training, and coordination between civil and Sharia judiciaries. Selim also noted societal shame and psychological pressures that force women to give up their rights, stressing the need for awareness and empowerment.

Ms. Rana Aoun, a gender-based violence expert, defined economic violence as controlling or restricting women's access to financial resources. She explained its impact on personal, family, and societal levels, influenced by patriarchal norms and intensified by crises. Aoun recommended educating women about legal rights, shifting societal values, developing skills, and engaging with organizations like KAFA, RDFL, and USPEaK for support. She emphasized the right of women to live free from violence and pursue their aspirations.

Finally, A survivor of economic violence shared her experience of enduring economic and physical abuse. Despite significant deprivation, she described her resourcefulness in supporting her family through agriculture and pastry making. Her story included societal reactions to her divorce, challenges in securing inheritance rights, and the lack of support from religious laws. She advised other divorced mothers to be resilient and focus on their education.

Interviews Analysis:

The interviews provide a comprehensive view of the complexities surrounding Economic Gender-Based Violence (EGBV). They reveal that EGBV is not only a personal issue but a systemic one, deeply entrenched in societal norms and legal frameworks. Legal shortcomings and the difficulties in proving economic abuse, along with societal stigma and lack of support for women navigating these systems, significantly hinder efforts to address EGBV effectively. The interviews also highlight the severe impact of EGBV on individuals' mental health, family dynamics, and societal participation, indicating that the consequences extend far beyond immediate financial deprivation. Despite various initiatives aimed at combating EGBV, such as those by USPEaK, there remains a critical need for comprehensive and coordinated strategies that integrate legal, societal, and support system reforms. The prevalent gap in awareness about EGBV among women further complicates the issue, emphasizing the necessity for targeted education and advocacy to empower survivors and inform broader societal understanding.



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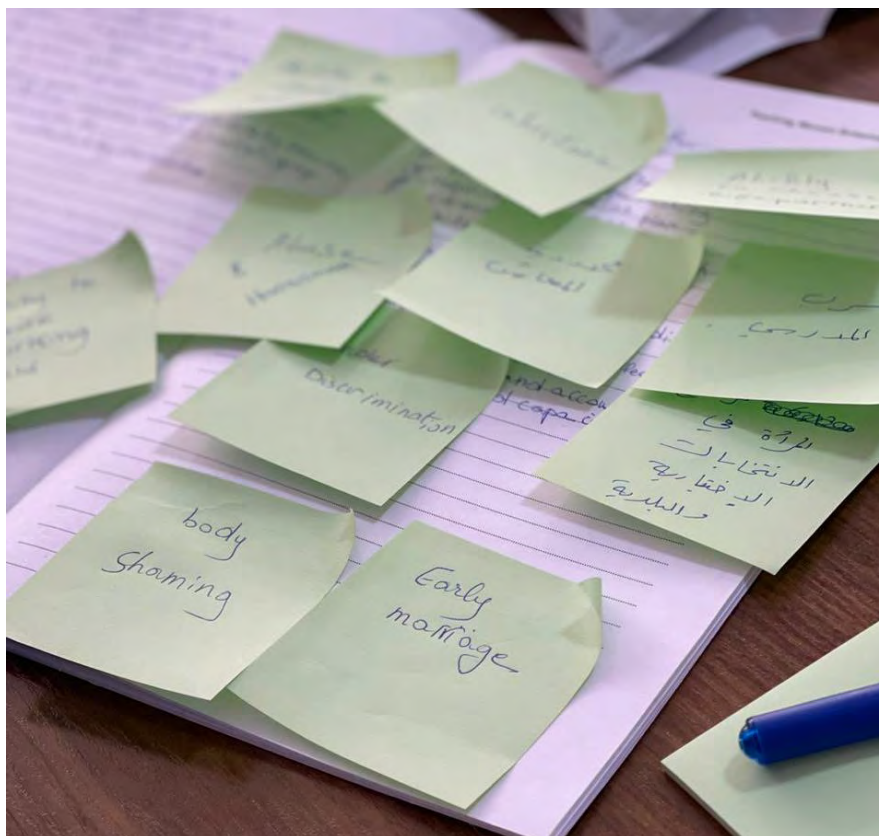
Based on the interviews, several key conclusions can be drawn regarding Economic Gender-Based Violence (EGBV):

Systemic Reforms Needed: Economic Gender-Based Violence (EGBV) is deeply embedded in societal and legal frameworks, indicating that systemic reforms are essential for effective intervention. Inadequacies in law and Sharia Law and the complexities in proving economic abuse, highlight the necessity for comprehensive legislative changes and ijihad in Sharia. These reforms should address legal protections and enforcement mechanisms to support survivors better and prevent EGBV.

Impact on Well-Being: The severe consequences of EGBV extend beyond financial deprivation to affect individuals' mental health, family dynamics, and broader societal participation. The interviews emphasize that interventions must integrate mental health support to address the multifaceted impacts of EGBV. This includes addressing depression, substance abuse, and the erosion of self-worth, which are prevalent among survivors.

Barriers to Effective Support: The persistent barriers—such as legal shortcomings, societal stigma, and insufficient support systems—significantly impede efforts to combat EGBV. Legal frameworks often fail to protect women adequately, and societal attitudes can perpetuate the stigma associated with EGBV, making it challenging for women to seek help and justice. Addressing these barriers requires not only legal reforms but also societal changes to reduce stigma and improve support for survivors.

Need for Enhanced Education and Awareness: There is a significant gap in awareness about EGBV among women, which complicates efforts to address it. Many women lack knowledge about their rights and the full scope of economic violence, indicating the need for targeted educational programs. These programs should raise awareness about EGBV, educate women on their legal rights, and provide information on available support resources.





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Comprehensive Strategies Required: Effective strategies to combat EGBV must involve a multi-pronged approach that includes legal reforms, societal value shifts, skill development programs, and robust support from organizations. A coordinated effort among various stakeholders—such as government bodies, NGOs, and community organizations—is essential for creating a supportive environment and providing comprehensive assistance to survivors.

Importance of Support Organizations: Organizations like USPEaK play a crucial role in addressing EGBV through targeted programs and interventions. Their efforts demonstrate the effectiveness of dedicated initiatives and highlight the need for continued support and expansion of such programs. Strengthening these organizations and their initiatives can help improve the reach and impact of EGBV interventions.

Findings Analysis of the Interviews and the Survey

This study examines the complex dynamics of economic gender-based violence (EGBV) in Baalbeck, revealing significant insights into its prevalence, the effectiveness of support systems, and the roles of various societal factors.

Prevalence and Awareness of EGBV:

The data indicate that EGBV is a pervasive issue in Baalbeck, with 40% of respondents experiencing or knowing someone who has experienced such violence. This high prevalence underscores the widespread nature of EGBV in the region. Interviews with professionals, such as Dr. Maria and Ms. Ruba Makarem, highlight that economic violence often manifests through deprivation of financial resources, coercion, and exploitation, which align with the respondents' experiences.

Perpetrators of EGBV:

The identification of partners or husbands (81%), family members (57%), employers (62%), and guardians (36%) as perpetrators highlights the multifaceted nature of EGBV in Baalbeck. The dominance of intimate partners as perpetrators suggests that patriarchal norms and familial control are significant contributors to EGBV. This is consistent with the interviews, which emphasize the influence of traditional and cultural norms on economic abuse.

Support Systems and Effectiveness:

The reliance on informal support systems (33% turning to family or relatives) and the low percentage seeking help from security authorities (5%), lawyers (6%), and NGOs (14%) point to a lack of trust or awareness regarding formal support mechanisms. The finding that 70% of those who sought help reported adverse outcomes indicates a critical gap in the effectiveness of existing support systems. This aligns with the professional insights on the systemic barriers women face, such as inadequate legal frameworks, lack of resources, and societal stigma.

Workplace Discrimination:

The perception that women do not receive the same workplace privileges as men (71% no, 29% yes) underscores systemic economic discrimination. Respondents highlighted disparities in promotions, salaries, and benefits, which contribute to women's economic dependence and vulnerability to EGBV.





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Interviews with professionals further emphasize how workplace discrimination escalates economic abuse, suggesting a need for gender-sensitive workplace policies in Baalbeck.

Legal Protections:

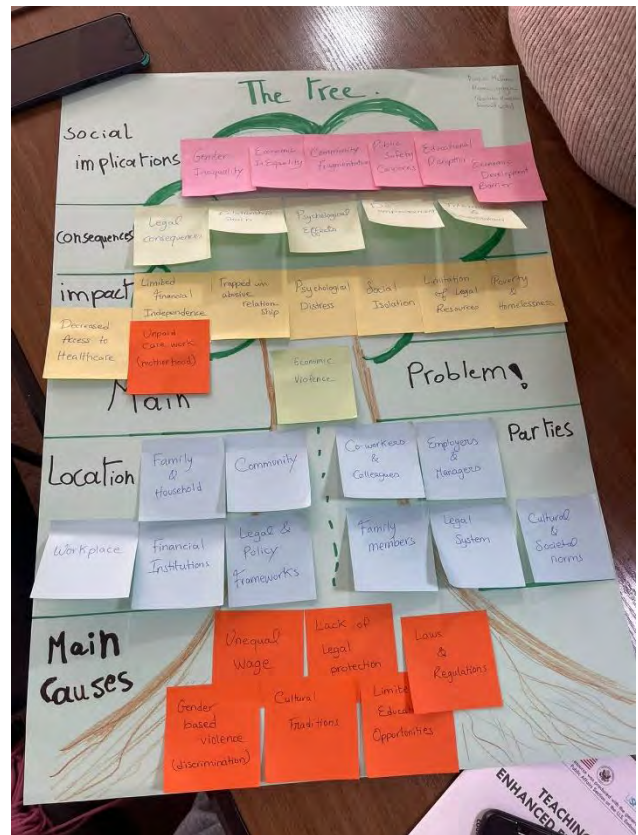
The perception that legal protections are inadequate (84% no, 16% yes) despite existing laws like Law 293/2014 highlights a disconnect between legislation and enforcement. Interviews with legal professionals, such as Lawyer Soumar Slim, underscore the challenges women face in accessing justice, including proving abuse and dealing with gender biases. This calls for legal reforms and better awareness campaigns to ensure women can effectively utilize legal protections.

Role of Civil Society Institutions:

While many respondents acknowledged the positive role of civil society institutions, criticisms about their reach and effectiveness suggest these organizations need to enhance their strategies. Ms. Ruba Makarem emphasized the importance of civil society in raising awareness and providing support but also pointed out their limitations. This indicates a need to strengthen the capacity and reach of civil society organizations in Baalbeck to offer comprehensive support.

Interconnectedness and Comprehensive Solutions:

The interconnectedness of these findings reveals a complex cycle where EGBV is both a cause and effect of economic vulnerabilities. Workplace discrimination and inadequate support systems amplify women's financial dependence, making them more susceptible to EGBV. This, in turn, hinders their ability to seek better employment or legal recourse, trapping them in a cycle of abuse.





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Conclusion

The research on economic gender-based violence (EGBV) in Baalbeck uncovers a multifaceted issue impacting a substantial segment of the population. The findings indicate that EGBV is deeply embedded in societal norms, workplace inequities, and inadequate legal protections. A notable proportion of respondents have either personally experienced EGBV or know someone who has, underscoring the widespread prevalence of this form of violence. The heavy reliance on informal support systems and the ineffectiveness of formal avenues for seeking help highlight the urgent need for comprehensive, accessible, and practical support mechanisms.

Workplace discrimination emerges as a significant contributor to EGBV, with many women being deprived of equal privileges and salaries compared to their male counterparts. This economic disparity fosters financial dependency and increases vulnerability to various forms of abuse. Despite laws like Law 293/2014, the current legal framework is insufficiently enforced and fails to offer adequate protection against economic abuse.

While civil society institutions are crucial in raising awareness and providing support, their efforts are frequently constrained by limited resources and reach. The survey results demonstrate that although many respondents acknowledge the importance of these institutions, there is a pressing need for more effective and expansive interventions. Overall, the data underscores the necessity for robust legal, social, and economic reforms to combat EGBV and support affected women comprehensively.

Recommendations

Based on the insights gathered from the survey responses and professional interviews, the following recommendations are proposed to address and mitigate economic gender-based violence in Baalbeck:

1. NGOs and Civil Society:

Awareness and Training: Conduct workshops and training sessions to raise awareness about EGBV among all societal groups and empower women with the necessary skills and knowledge to participate in the workforce.

Educational Programs: Implement programs to educate women on financial literacy and entrepreneurship to foster economic independence.

Support Services: Establish women's centers offering free legal aid, counseling, and support groups to provide comprehensive assistance to EGBV victims.

2. Political Parties:

Legislation and Enforcement: Enact and rigorously enforce laws addressing financial control, employment discrimination, and denial of inheritance. Ensure inheritance laws guarantee equal rights for women.

Policy Integration: Integrate gender perspectives into all economic policies and programs and develop national action plans with clear goals and timelines targeting economic violence.

Economic Opportunities: Increase job opportunities and ensure salary adjustments to promote income equality.





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3. Media, including Social Media:

Educational Campaigns: Launch financial literacy programs designed for women to enhance their economic knowledge and capabilities.

Awareness Campaigns: Conduct public awareness campaigns to educate communities about the forms and impacts of EGBV and to challenge societal norms that perpetuate discrimination.

4. Security Forces:

Support Systems: Provide free legal aid services, shelters, and safe spaces for women who are victims of economic violence. Establish resource centers offering information, legal advice, and referral services.

Counseling and Support Groups: Facilitate access to counseling and support groups for women to help them cope with the effects of EGBV and rebuild their lives.

5. Community and Educational Institutions:

Cultural and Behavioral Change: Promote social and cultural behavior modification through education, targeting the next generation to foster a culture of equality and respect.

Economic Empowerment: Encourage self-sufficiency and financial independence for women by providing vocational training and support for income-generating activities.

Therefore, to foster a more supportive and equitable environment for women in Baalbeck, it is crucial to address critical areas contributing to economic gender-based violence. By reducing the prevalence of EGBV and empowering women to achieve financial independence and societal equality, we can create meaningful and lasting change. The combined efforts of NGOs, political entities, media, security forces, and the community are essential to protecting the rights and well-being of women.





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Appendices

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